

Umicore signs up to funds its own site recoveries

Jef Tavernier, Flemish Minister of Environment, OVAM (Flemish regional waste authority) and international metals and materials group, Umicore, have signed an agriculture and development cooperation covenant concerning the soil sanitation in and around four Flemish Umicore sites.

After a long period of preparation, further sanitation of the soil and groundwater contamination can now be successfully completed in the next few years. Umicore has budgeted a total of €77m for the work and is settling a historic legacy of more than 100 years

industrial activity at Balen, Hoboken, Olen and Overpelt.

“For the first time the government and a private company have succeeded in jointly undertaking such a large operation for a healthier environment,” says Jef Tavernier.

Umicore bears the brunt of the cost; the Flemish government pays the rest. Of Umicore's €77m, some €15m goes to the central fund, €39m is allotted for the work to be performed by Umicore and €23m needed for operational expenses over the next 15 years.

AXT delays financials

The completion of the 2004 Q1 financial review and verification process has been delayed, due to an investigation by AXT's Audit Committee of certain product testing practices and policies. Interestingly at

March 29, 2004, AXT share acquisitions of 5% made by the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, Merrill Lynch & Co and CEO Morris S Young, gave a 15% shareholding between the three players.

Cancer & chemical link study

The Semiconductor Industry Assoc is to conduct a study of former clean-room workers to determine whether there are links between cancer and chemicals used in chipmaking.

Several cancer epidemiologists with experience in the electronics industry

have say a study is overdue.

In a preliminary report, researchers say industry has sufficient historical data on fab workers to conduct this study which will be conducted across participating SIA members with no timeline for completion.

Rofin-Sinar eyes acquisitions

Laser developer and manufacturer Rofin-Sinar Technologies Inc is to sell 2.5m shares of its common stock at a public offering price of \$28/share, net proceeds of approximately \$66.5m. This will be used for working capital, corporate purposes and acquisitions of complementary products, technologies or businesses.

In February Rofin-Sinar Laser GmbH, an affiliate, acquired 90% of the common stock of Optoskand AB, Gothenburg, a manufacturer of high power fibreoptic beam delivery systems predominantly for cutting, welding and marking with 25 employees and annual sales of \$3m, in a cash transaction. The remaining 10% of the common stock of Optoskand AB is held by pre-spin-off parent Permanova Holding AB.